



**Media Release
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Senator Linda Evans Parlette Receives Award from State's Hospitals
Senator Recognized for Extraordinary Service to Rural Hospitals

At the Columbia Basin Hospital Council meeting in Grand Coulee on September 4, Senator Linda Evans Parlette will be given the Rural Health Care Legislator of the Year Award from the Washington State Hospital Association. The inscription on the award reads, "Senator Linda Evans Parlette - Thank you for being a good friend to rural hospitals."

Al Beach, Administrator of Columbia Basin Hospital in Ephrata and President of the Columbia Basin Hospital Council, will present the award to Senator Parlette. "Senator Parlette has been a tireless advocate for Washington's rural hospitals. She showed particular dedication during the 2003 state legislative session. We are all so pleased to have the opportunity to recognize her outstanding work on our behalf."

Some of the particular issues Senator Parlette championed this year in support of rural hospitals and health care included:

- Allowing public hospital districts the same flexibility enjoyed by private hospitals to recruit and train key staff. Public hospital districts were unreasonably restricted by the State Auditors Office in their recruitment practices and were disadvantaged compared to other health care providers. Senator Parlette led the successful charge to level the playing field.
- Seeking solutions for the particular medical liability issues faced by Washington's small, rural public hospital districts. Senator Parlette championed an amendment to medical liability reform bills giving rural public hospital districts more protections as local governments. Unfortunately, the medical liability reform bills did not pass.
- Working to bring public hospital districts that operate nursing homes their fair share of Proshare funding (supplemental funding from the federal government for nursing homes). Senator Parlette's leadership led to a significant increase in the amount of Proshare funding for nursing homes over what was originally proposed by the state legislature.

Mike Wiltermood, CEO of Coulee Community Hospital, host of the September 4 meeting, said, "Senator Parlette's continual commitment to rural health care has benefited not only the hospitals in her own district and other rural areas of the state, but also the people we serve who need health care. She takes the health of our communities very seriously, and we are truly grateful."

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